



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Omaha District

Field Office of the Month

Gavins Point Dam and Lewis and Clark Lake

Getting to know projects within the Omaha District

September 2001



Historical reenactor Bob Plummer converses with visitors of the Lewis and Clark Festival at the Gavins Point Dam Training Dike Recreation Center. Plummer is a member of the St. Charles Corps of Discovery, an organization of historical reenactors.

Historical reenactors highlight festival

**Article and photo
by Monique Farmer
Public Affairs Assistant**

The word is spreading. More than 10,000 visitors made their way to Gavins Point Dam to take part in the 4th annual Lewis and Clark Festival in late August.

"Every year people hear more and more about it and it increases visibility," says Carol Ryan, supervisory natural resources specialist.

Developed by the Yankton Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission, the festival is an annual commemoration of the Lewis and Clark expedition through the area. The event features guest speakers, various

modern food and historical vendors, artists and historical reenactors.

"The purpose is to help educate the public on the importance of the Lewis and Clark expedition," says Ryan, who is the president of the Yankton Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission.

The Lewis and Clark Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, Mo. traveled to Yankton to contribute to the educational success of the festival. The group helped teach the history of the Lewis and Clark expedition at the festival. Each member assumes the role of an individual from the original expedition of 1804.

In an attempt to engage in the life-style of that period as closely as possible, the men sleep in canvas tents, use flint and steel to start fires and cook on open flames. They even wear clothing made from animal skins.

"Every day's a challenge—cooking and living out in the open world," says Rick Roberts. Wearing a bearskin hat called a fatigue hat, Roberts portrays Private Thomas Howard, an interpreter and guide for Lewis and Clark's group.

A retired military man from Tennessee, Roberts has traveled with

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US Army Corps
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Lewis and Clark Festival



As the reenactors travel from area to area, they bring items such as guns and knives for hunting.



Photos by Monique Farmer
In an attempt to relive the period of Lewis and Clark, members of the Corps of Discovery cook on an open flame.



Photo courtesy of Carol Ryan

The Corps of Discovery Expedition constructed this 55-foot keelboat. It was featured in the Lewis and Clark Festival parade.



Photo courtesy of Carol Ryan

Expedition members from the St. Charles Corps of Discovery perform various maneuvers on a 55-foot keelboat.



A tent used by members of Plummer's crew from the St. Charles Corps of Discovery is left open for display purposes.

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Lewis and Clark Festival

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the group for more than three years.

With 120-plus members, each of the men got involved with the Corps of Discovery for different reasons.

A drive for adventure attracted Roberts to the organization, "I'm adventurous," he says. "I have to do everything at least one time."

Another member, Bob Plummer who portrays George Droulliard, trains the crew to re-create the Lewis and Clark expedition from Elizabeth, Pa. to Mandan, N.D.

Plummer's primary reason for getting involved is to educate children and adults, he says.

"I've been a Lewis and Clark history buff since I was a kid," Plummer says. "I think the purpose is

teaching. I think if the kids find out that history is fun, they might get a little more interested in school."

The men will not visit Yankton again until the Lewis and Clark bicentennial commemoration in 2004, when they will reenact the expedition to coincide with the period when Lewis and Clark came through Yankton in late August during the original expedition.

Traveling in a 55-foot hand-built replica keelboat, a 39-foot white pirogue and a 41-foot-6-inch red pirogue, constructed by the members of the Corps of Discovery, the men will venture the same route and follow the same timeline as Lewis and Clark. One modernization is that the St. Charles group will have the advantage of diesel engines inside

their boats as opposed to pushing or pulling them up the river.

The keelboat, which took three years (an estimated 3,000 man-hours) for the group to build, was trailered to the Training Dike Recreation Area at Gavins Point Dam and displayed for festival attendees to view.

"On the bicentennial trip, school children will be able to interview us daily on the boat," Plummer says. "From our Web site, we will have Internet access on the boat. Teachers can pull up the site and interact with what's there."

Similar groups who took part in this year's event included the South Dakota Lewis and Clark Reenactors and the Kansas City Missouri Valley Historical Interpreters.

A glimpse at Gavins Point area activities

The Lewis and Clark Visitor Center in Yankton (Box 710, Yankton, S.D. 57078) is open Memorial Day through Labor Day, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mon.- Fri., 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sat. & Sun. Off-season, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mon.- Fri., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sat. and Sun. Closed December and January.

Attractions: Interactive Exhibits, Bookstore, Theater, Prairie Garden, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Walk

Admission: Free

For information, contact the Visitor Services Desk at (402) 667-7873 ext. 3246

Festivals/Special Events

Eagle Watch

This two-day program brings awareness to the surrounding communities about the bald eagle, our national symbol. The Raptor Center from the Twin Cities brought 4 raptors, including two bald eagles, and presents programs in the theater. The last event attracted more than 500 people to the center.

Water Safety Carnival

This program focuses on the importance of water safety in and around the water. Free canoe rides, a puppet show, and safety stations are all incorporated into the event. The latest event attracted more than 200 attendees and 3 cooperating agencies.

Ethnic Foods and Tracing Your Genealogy

The program focuses on different ethnic groups, their customs and especially their foods. The last program attracted more than 100 participants.

Recurring Events

"Pioneer Pride Day" and "Native American Day" Special guest speakers and re-enactors highlight these two events.

Temporary Exhibits

Exhibits are displayed throughout the visitor center,

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Gavins Point Project: a tremendous success story

By David Becker

Project Manager

When asked to write a short article about the Gavins Point Project, my immediate instinct as an unabashed cheerleader of the project is to tell you what a great success it is. I think that's a pretty good instinct, so I'll follow through with it.

The Gavins Point Project, as well as most of the Corps water resource projects, is a tremendous success. When I look at our missions of flood damage reduction, hydropower, navigation, fish and wildlife management, and recreation, I can't help but think that the project has been extremely successful in all of those arenas. So successful, in fact, that we are often taken for granted.

People are so confident of our ability to reduce the damage from Missouri River flooding that they build homes and conduct business closer to the river and with more confidence than ever before.

The hydroelectric power plant —day in, day out, year in, year out — continues to provide safe and reliable electricity to about 100,000 people with little flair or fanfare. Navigation is reasonably priced and reliable on the Missouri River up to Sioux City, Iowa.

Benefits many

The fish and wildlife management program conserves important natural resources benefiting a wide variety of groups, including those interested in hunting, fishing, and other uses of natural resources.

Some 1.7 million people, from many states and nations, visit the Gavins Point Project each year to enjoy its recreation and beauty.

The credit for Gavins Point' success goes to a lot of people. Everyone who has had a part in this project since its genesis should receive credit for that.

Who are they?

For decades, public citizens petitioned Congress to find solutions to the Missouri River problems. In the 1940s, visionaries in the Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation crafted the Pick-Sloan Plan. Members of Congress pushed the authorization and funding through, with special help and effort from Senator Chan Gurney of Yankton, a staunch champion of the project.

Corps of Engineer employees built and operated the project. Engineers and planners designed this high-



Becker

quality project for effectiveness and longevity.

The real estate folks deserve credit for purchasing all of the land and easements from landowners having strong ties to the land.

The construction staff and those who managed the huge contracts deserve recognition, as do all of the devoted staff members who supported this entire endeavor.

Talk about a time of change —going from pre-reservoir conditions to status quo makes the era we are currently in look like we are stuck in the mud for lack of change.

Great pride

I believe that a great number of civil servants, such as those mentioned above, take great pride in being civilian employees of the United States government. I know that I do and I hope you do, too. Similar to the patriotism demonstrated by members of the armed forces, I believe that civil servants are often patriots, but in a less conspicuous sort of way.

The missions at Gavins Point have changed somewhat. The world is so different from when the "greatest generation" developed its visions for these projects in the

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Thoughts from the lake manager

LETTER

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post-war era of the 1940's and '50s.

The tools it took to accomplish those missions have changed considerably, too. There are many more entities involved in the operations of the Gavins Point Project than before. Immediately after construction, management could have been accurately described as federal, whereas now it would be considered a mosaic of groups, including the feds.

What's hot at Gavins Point? Recreation, for starters. The lake area is booming right now, with so many visitors. The parks around the lake area, of which the Corps manages four, see more visitors and get more usage every year. Just about every kind of recreation is on the increase. The campgrounds are full, the picnic areas are full, and the marinas are full. Fishing is extremely popular, of course, but even the number of people just driving around sight-seeing is as high as ever.

Increasing demand

The Lewis and Clark Visitor Center is a magnet for all who want a first class lake experience. Private facilities are opening all of the time to meet the increasing demands of increasing recreation. Demand for private campgrounds, restaurants and sports equipment rentals are booming. Houses are popping up around the lake like wildflowers. There are a lot of good places around the lake to put up a house, thanks to lack of lake level fluctuation. People like to have a home with a view of the lake, and Lewis and Clark Lake is a good place to do it.

I believe that the kind of economic boom currently underway at Corps lakes is exactly what the visionaries of the '40s and '50s had hoped for. As rough as the war period was, I don't believe that they could have possibly fathomed the prosperity that we enjoy today. The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration will be huge up here—it's already starting to gather speed. For three years, we have partnered with the City of Yankton, the National Park Service, the State of South Dakota, the Yankton Sioux Tribe, private groups, and others, to offer a Lewis and Clark Festival on the fourth weekend of August since 1999.

It is a fun, well-attended festival with a lot to offer visitors. It is done in a historically accurate fashion and takes visitors back to the time period when Lewis and

Clark came through this area in 1804. Some of the popular features include encampments of groups reenacting the expedition, an encampment of Yankton Sioux, a buffalo feed, tour buses visiting Lewis and Clark sites, lectures by prominent Lewis and Clark scholars, reenactment of the council, and more. The event is only going to do one thing, and that is to grow.

More attention

The generation of electricity and the operation of hydroelectric power plants is getting a bit more attention these days, given the shortage of electricity in California and potential shortages across the nation.

The Gavins Point Power plant provides some \$20-million in benefits to the nation each year, and has been a proven performer since 1957.

When I tell people about the power plant, I compare it to the car you've owned for 200,000 miles and still runs great!

It's a combination of excellent design, first rate construction, and top-notch operation and maintenance during its 44 years. It won't be too long, however, before we'll need serious maintenance work performed on the plant. It seems like Gavins Point may be a strong candidate for a major rehab job in the future—a major increase in power generation could be achieved by upgrading the turbines and the transformers.

T & E efforts grow

The arena of Threatened and Endangered Species continues to grow as now Corps activities focus on the pallid sturgeon as well as the piping plover and least tern.

Did you know that Gavins Point is the "home" of the District Endangered Species Coordinator, Casey Kruse, and his staff?

It just so happens that the most reasonable place to house a District function like T&E management is at a field office. This mission evolves on a continuous basis as most of our missions do.

The successes at Gavins Point have been great—as great as the many upcoming challenges.

Are we up to it? Yes, I think so. We need that total mosaic of partners, which includes you and other Corps people at all levels, working together with non-Corps partners to provide a quality product to the American public in a timely fashion.

So let's do it!



Tricks of the administrative trade

Article and photo by Monique Farmer

When she arrives to work every morning, an inbox folder filled with new e-mail messages greets Carol Draughon, administrative officer at the Gavins Point Project Office. The file mailbox on her desk is covered with interesting new projects to tackle—some labeled emergency—and a number of her co-workers will soon make their way in to visit, but not without PR&C approval requests.

Draughon has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the past 18 years. She began her career with the Corps in 1971. At that time, she served as a payroll clerk in Omaha.

In 1981, Draughon and her family moved to Yankton.

She has been in her current position for 13 years and is responsible for various personnel issues at the Gavins Point Project Office.

Her duties include matters corresponding to purchasing, property, budget, timekeeping, travel, training, physicals, correspondence, mail and medical surveillance programs.

"I handle all the personnel issues from start to finish and even some that fall in between," Draughon says.

The duties of administrative officer involved many different responsibilities that are sometimes hard to complete and to keep on top of, she says.

Her organizational skills have played a vital role in helping her to remain on task. Draughon usually



Draughon

makes an attempt to plan her daily activities the day before.

As a typical day progresses, she finds her workload has a potential to more than double, depending upon what is happening at the project.

"I do a lot of assisting employees when section chiefs are gone," she says.

For instance, a number of employees took a day of annual leave away from the stresses of work and met to compete in the 13th Annual Golf Classic, 2 Person Best Ball Tournament at the Crofton Lakeview Golf Course in August.

As a result, a number of section chiefs were able to leave the office worry free thanks to Draughon, who performs administrative tasks for them while they are away.

"If anything needs to be done that requires approval of some kind, I am the one who is there to do that. I arrange training for employees, assist them with their medical surveillance program if they have any kind of accident reporting, workman's comp or whatever," she says. "I'm like

another mother—let's put it that way."

A mother of two adult children, son Dwayne and daughter, Brenda and grandmother of two boys, Ryan and Chadrick, Draughon has had plenty of practice.

Though her children were raised in Yankton, both now reside in North Carolina, where Draughon's husband is originally from. The couple makes it a point to travel to visit the children at least twice a year. Draughon looks forward to an upcoming trip in October.

"I just have to make sure everything is okay here," she says.

One of the most challenging aspects of her position is maintaining a level of outstanding accomplishment, she says.

"Trying to keep up with everything on a level of accomplishment that I'd like to keep it on—at the top—is a challenge," she says. "With the amount of work filtering into the field office, I have to struggle with that sometimes."

Draughon considers her position the center of every possible situation that may arise at Gavins Point.

"The position here is important because it is at the center of everything," she says. "It may start at one end of the project, but it will always end up here. If it's got to be funded or if it's got to be charged to whatever, it all comes back to the administrative section in one way or another."

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Employee Profiles

Draughon continued from page 4

Draughon attempts to maintain some amount of sanity by incorporating outside hobbies into her work whenever possible.

In her spare time, she makes floral crafts and memory boxes for friends and church members. Many of the bulletin boards on display inside the project office also are the works of Draughon.

"I have bulletin boards done that feature employee's children sometime and identify temporary employees so there are no strangers around," she says.

Draughon also initiated the construction of an annual

Gavins Point scrapbook, which includes pictures of employee accomplishments throughout the project.

"Individuals can submit pictures as they complete something at the project, take part in events or give awards," she says.

Before she began working with the Corps, she ran a craft shop out of the basement of her home, called Carol's Craft Corner.

Once retirement approaches, Draughon hopes to explore the sales business once more.

"It would just be something I'd like to dabble with. Also, I'd like to do some volunteer work, like adopt a grandmother at a nursing home," she says.

Experience plays integral role in heavy equipment operating

Article and photo by Monique Farmer

Bright eyed, Ronald Freng, heavy equipment operator, reports to work every morning by 7 a.m.

His primary responsibility upon arrival is to conduct weather readings and call them into the radio station at Gavins Point Dam.

Of course, there are the daily housekeeping necessities such as e-mail, time sheets and whatnot. But as soon as possible, "it's go out and do the job," Freng says.

For more than 21 years, Freng has operated both the mobile and barge cranes, which are machines used for raising, shifting and lowering heavy materials, at Gavins Point.

The machines are used for doing work out on the project and on the lake.

"We do things like mold the slopes of the embankment, repair water lines and sewer lines if they are broken or leaking," Freng says.

"In the wintertime, we keep the project roads open, clean parking lots and boat ramps and remove snow," he says.

Prior to working with the Corps,



Freng

Freng spent two years in the Marine Corps.

"There was an opening for a part-time position and a friend of mine at job services referred me to the job," he says. "I applied for it and got it."

The friendly atmosphere is what has kept him here, he says. "It's a good job, a good place to work," says Freng.

"I'm doing something different everyday and I'm outside all the time."

Experience has played an integral role in making Freng successful at what he does.

"You can't just think you can operate equipment, jump on and do

it," he says. "It takes experience."

Much of Freng's experience has come through years of hands-on practice.

He'd like to see the Corps put more emphasis on training individuals in his line of work.

"I think it would be more beneficial to see someone actually demonstrating the use of some of the heavy equipment we operate before we go out and do it," Freng says.

"There are always new methods of doing things and to see how someone else does it would be very beneficial," he adds.

After he retires the cranes every evening, Freng spends much of his time volunteering for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 791 in Yankton.

He is the commander of the organization, which helps veterans recognize military holidays such as Independence Day and Memorial Day.

Also, the group sponsors youth baseball, girls' softball, hunter safety courses and Boy Scouts.

"Other than that, I play a lot of bad golf," Freng says.



Three decades of civil engineering

A civil engineering technician must possess a motivation to learn new things and the willingness to take on responsibilities as delegated, says Louis Brewer, who holds the position at Gavins Point.

Delegated tasks range from watching a contractor to checking the depth of boat ramps and conducting bank inspections.

“My personal goals are to try and finish up courses to get my civil technology degree as well as take on a few extra duties around the project,” he says.

One of the duties he hopes to assist with is helping the staff engineer at Gavins Point Dam take care of GSA vehicles, which entails ordering vehicles that need to be replaced, assigning them to the different sections at the project and making up gas cards so the vehicles can be refilled as necessary.

Keeping the dam safe

Brewer’s current priority at the project is dam safety. The job consists of monthly monitoring of instrumentation (reading piezometer relief wells, and uplift piezometers) and surveying the embankment of the dam.

Other duties include taking care of contracts pertaining to construction, replacing of relief wells, building new comfort stations and implementing new yard hydrants for water in the campgrounds.

To ensure safety of the dam, Brewer follows a daily surveillance plan. On certain days, he is required to pay close attention to different areas of the dam. The objective is to inspect the dam for possible problem areas on the embankment, such as the development of mud slides.

With the exception of interruption for monthly instrumentation duty, Brewer’s daily agenda typically follows a uniform schedule.

“If there happens to come a day when I have to do instrumentation, then the day is dedicated to that,” he says.

Following instrumentation, Brewer sets aside a day to enter all the information into the computer and forward it to Omaha, where it is plotted and compared to other readings, he says.

In his 27th year with the Corps, Brewer is considering returning to college to finish up his associate’s degree. One motivation for continuing his education is the desire to move up to his next grade, Brewer says.

“Right now, I would probably only enroll in night courses.” Having moved up through Corps ranks, Brewer says he is proud of his career accomplishments.

“I started out with maintenance over at the visitor center off and on for four years,” he says. “Then, I went to outside maintenance for two years when a position in the powerhouse opened up for civil engineer.

“I figured this would be a good challenge for me so I took it upon myself to start training through the staff engineer in the Upward Mobility Program. Also, I enrolled in courses at the University of South Dakota at Springfield.”

Brewer attended school part-time for two years. He received a civil engineering technician certificate through the Corps. Knowing the do’s and don’ts of how to handle a contract and contractors is the most challenging aspect of his position, Brewer says.

“It is also important to know the do’s and don’ts of dam safety,” he adds.

Outside of work, much of Brewer’s time is dedicated to home improvement efforts. He recently extended his driveway, put in four rock flowerbeds and added an additional driveway paved with bricks. He also planted a vegetable garden, which he and wife, Kathy, maintain.

For relaxation, Brewer enjoys camping and fishing with his wife and three children, Heather, Jason and Alison.



Brewer



Under new management

**Article and Photo
by Monique Farmer**

Power plant superintendent Brett Barnhart won't let his rookie status get in the way of his mission for Gavins Point Dam. He has been in his current position just eight months and already, he has made an impact on the management of the power plant and field workers.

"My personal goal here is to mold a more cohesive team out of the guys down at the shop as well as with the operators themselves," Barnhart says.

Though he is still undergoing his last few mandatory training courses as well as absorbing much of the ins and outs of various aspects of what goes on at the project, Barnhart has set aside time to emphasize the importance of increasing communication efforts and employee relations between field workers. In the past, electricians, operators and mechanics did not have anyone to act as a go-between if there was a conflict or difference of opinion, he says. His position implements that mediation.

"I'm the glue that gets them all together," he says. Thus far, Barnhart has put forth an enormous amount of effort in the way of raising communication levels. One of his initial steps toward bettering communication is to have a meeting with senior mechanics every morning at 7 a.m. about the intended accomplishments for the day. This is also a way for Barnhart to obtain updates on things previous day occurrences. After the meetings, he makes rounds, which includes visiting with powerhouse employees and the controller.



Barnhart

"One of my goals is to improve the communication amongst the group and develop a stronger safety conscious group of people."

Barnhart has gained the reputation of being a stickler for enforcing safety issues, he says.

"A lot of what I try to do is simply reinforcement of the safety requirements and demonstrating the fact that I do care about whether employees walk out of here in one piece," says Barnhart.

Throughout a typical workday, Barnhart oversees and manages power plant operations. He also supervises the performance of maintenance and workers, schedules outage maintenance, coordinates maintenance in and outside of the powerhouse and acts as a liaison for Omaha and the power plant personnel.

For instance, when Omaha has a request for Gavins Point Dam to perform a specific task, they contact Barnhart who in turn relays the message to the power plant or field workers.

"Most of my day is wandering around checking with the guys keeping myself available should they have a question, problem or concern," he says.

Prior to working with the Corps, Barnhart spent nine years with a private utility company, Commonwealth Edison, in Northern Illinois. There, he served as a quality control inspector and maintenance work planner. Unhappy in his position, he searched for new employment and landed the superintendent position with the Corps of Engineers in Yankton. Learning the Corps regulations has been one of the more challenging aspects of the new position, he says.

"Because I am not originally a Corps person and have not grown up with the Corps and Army regulations, it's tough," he says.

Both training and asking questions have been beneficial in helping Barnhart become familiar with Corps policies and regulations, he says.

"It's helped a lot in the fact that I have been able to ask questions of people outside of the project and within the project," Barnhart says. "To be able to talk with my counterparts in and outside the Omaha District and with the people in the administration building has also been helpful. I've also been learning a lot through research on the Internet."

Ultimately, he would like to develop as a manager and leader.

"But I also want to see Gavins Point excel," he says. "We are slowly but surely developing a team which is what I really want to achieve—that team spirit. The team outlook is not just electricians, operators or mechanics. It's Gavins Point, our house."



Fore!



Billy Jo Sazue, summer maintenance worker at Big Bend Dam, practices before the 13th Annual Golf Classic, 2 Person Best Ball tournament begins. Corps employees, their families and retirees from various project sites gathered at Crofton Lakeview Golf Course, August 24, to compete. An awards presentation supper followed at Murdo's Resort, a BBQ restaurant in Yankton.

GAVINS POINT ACTIVITIES continued from page 3 —

with new exhibits featured every two weeks to give repeat visitors something new to see. Examples: "Celebrate Safely in the Sun" and "Let's Go Fishing"

Radio Program

Weekly recorded message.
Operates 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Weekly announcements, campground programs, and area information.

Weekly newsletter

Campground programs, special events, and safety messages distributed to campers and posted on bulletin boards.

Missouri River Information Center

Toll-free number located at Gavins Point Dam. Boating and Recreation maps for the Omaha District are sold through this center.

Point of Contact: Amy Johnson,
Park Ranger

Address: Box 710, Yankton, SD
57078

Organization: U.S. Army Corps of
Engineers

Telephone: (402) 667-7873 ext.
3280

Group lobbies Congress, seeks Corps assistance about sedimentation

by Monique Farmer

The Lewis and Clark Preservation Association has been actively working to obtain the attention of Congress about sedimentation problems on the Missouri River.

"They've raised funds and awareness and worked Congress very hard," says Dave Becker, lake manager at Gavins Point.

The organization meets quarterly, Becker says. "They get a lot of Congressional reps out to their meetings."

In working to assist the group with its efforts, the Corps of Engineers provides them with factual information on technical issues, Becker says.

The group lobbied Congress and obtained \$100,000 for FY2001 and FY2002, which has allowed the Corps to take a preliminary look at possible solutions.

Drafts of the results from the study are currently being developed and should be available for perusal within the next few months.

Initial concerns about sedimentation arose in the early '60s when recreational access was becoming a problem, Becker says.

"The main problem the group is concerned about raising of the water table at the upper end of the lake, which has flooded a number of private farmlands," Becker says.

"The group would like to see results ASAP," Becker says. "And they are working to get them."